



NEWS RELEASE

HOWARD COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF POLICE OFFICE OF PUBLIC AFFAIRS

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Police focus on enforcement as roadway speeds increase

Less traffic, more speeding during pandemic

Howard County police are ramping up efforts to address traffic safety as incidents of excessive speeding on county roadways have increased in recent weeks.

“With fewer cars on the road as a result of the state’s stay-at-home order, some drivers seem to have mistakenly assumed that traveling at high rates of speed would be an acceptable practice,” said Police Chief Lisa Myers. “We are receiving higher than usual complaints about speeding and officers have observed vehicles traveling much faster than the posted speed limits.”

Howard County officers will be focusing on serious traffic safety violations, such as excessive speeding, driving under the influence and other violations observed to be high-risk behavior. With no road congestion or rush hour delays to slow traffic, drivers have been observed racing past other cars, pedestrians and even police officers in recent weeks.

“Amid a global pandemic, it is important we stay safe in all aspects of our lives, including on our roadways,” said County Executive Calvin Ball. “With more residents walking, running and cycling to exercise outdoors, motorists must adhere to speed limits and traffic safety.”

Traffic volume across Maryland is down about 45 percent, according to the Maryland MVA. But the dramatic drop in traffic during the coronavirus pandemic has caused a dangerous surge in excessive speeding. According to MVA, 69 percent of speeding citations issued statewide from March 16 to April 17 were for violations at least 20 mph over the limit, or higher. More than 375 citations were for speeds of 90 mph or more.

On every traffic stop, Howard County officers will wear Personal Protection Equipment (PPE), including masks, gloves and protective eyewear. Drivers and passengers in a stopped vehicle will be strongly encouraged to wear masks during their limited interaction with the officer.

Police are urging drivers in Howard County to SLOW DOWN. With enforcement underway, safe drivers have the opportunity to save themselves a speeding ticket while at the same time, possibly saving lives.

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